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ASHLAND, O., SEPT. 8, 1886

Open Communion.

The articles are coming in pro and con on Open Communion. Now brethren you who have any thing to write on the subject, please do not make us the work of taking out personalities. Do not use the name of other writers. To be impartial we shall be obliged to erase them in every article. Present your arguments in the strongest way you can, but do not resort to using names. Also, do not say that open or close communion will work great harm to the church, and statements of this kind, for we do not know. If open communion is Gospel, then we are for open communion. If it is not Gospel, then we are against open communion; if it is neither or both, then we are for neither or both. Do not for a moment forget that our earnest brethren are for the New Testament, and we verily believe that they all will do what these Scriptures plainly teach; and, now as there is a difference on this question, let it be discussed in a candid, brotherly and Christian manner, and that will lead to uniformity of belief.

We are now in the midst of a general breaking up of the doctrines which were instilled into our minds by the Old Church, and every one, no doubt, will be weighed, and carefully weighed in the gospel scales, and examined through the gospel microscope, and any view that is found wanting or defective, do not allow your zeal to carry away your moderation and judgment, if that view happens to be yours. We are a band turned loose from the shackles of tradition, and earnestly searching for the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Let every brother, therefore adjust his gospel scales and microscope and carefully examine his own mind fixed doctrines, to see whether they are, "The Way, The Truth and The Life."

Argument of Concession on the Love Feast.

Herman Olshausen.—According to the custom among the ancient Christians, the celebration of the Love Feast was regularly connected with that of the holy supper, so that the whole ceremony formed a strict commemoration of our Lord's passover feast. Together they are viewed as one, and called the Lord's Supper.

Foot Note.—Catholic interpreters understand here only Agape without the Lord's Supper

[the Communion.] This is decidedly an error; the Apostolic church never celebrated an Agape without the Communion.—Commentary, on 1 Cor. 11.

Lyman Coleman.—The sacrament, however was celebrated annually, probably in connection with the passover, by the converts from the Jews, who, as appears from Epiphanius, continued for many years to observe this Jewish festival; and even in the Christian church generally, it was celebrated with peculiar solemnity at the festival of Easter which corresponded to this passover.—Ancient Christianity, page 418.

The Lord's Supper was originally celebrated in connection with a common meal by the disciples.—As above, page 425.

These feasts [Love Feasts] were usually celebrated in connection with the Lord's Supper; they seem to have taken place before the administration of the sacrament.—On the Agape, as above page 443.

After the example of the Jewish Passover and of the original institution, the Lord's Supper was accordingly at first united with a social meal, both constituted a whole, representing a communion of the faithful with their Lord, and their brotherly communion with one another. Both together were called the Supper of the Lord, known under the particular name of Agape.—As above, page 445.

George Waddington.—The celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist, was originally accompanied by a meeting, which somewhat partook of a hospitable nature, or at least of a charitable nature and was called Love Feast.—Church History, chapter 2nd.

Daniel Waterland.—The oldest name given to the holy ceremony was the breaking of bread.

This much, however is certain, that in the Apostolic times, the Love Feast and the Eucharist, though distinct, went together, and were closely allied to each other, and were both of them celebrated at one meeting.—Works, vol. 4, page 474.

Whether therefore the Lord's Supper, in 1 Cor. 11, signifies the Love Feast only, or both together, one thing is clear and unquestionable that they were both different parts of the same solemnity, or different acts of the same meeting; and there is no occasion to be scrupulously nice and critical in distinguishing to which of the parts the name strictly belongs.—Works, vol. 4, page 475.

Robert Nelson.—On this day [Sunday] we find St. Paul preaching at Troas, when the disciples came together to break bread; whereby it is understood the celebration of the sacrament, or their feasts of Charity, which were always accompanied by the Eucharist.—Companion of Festivals and Fasts, page 14.

But I wish Christians would retrieve the honor of such holy seasons, by the exercise of piety and charity, lest our spiritual governors should be forced to lay their festivals aside, as it is certain the ancients was to abolish even some Apostolic rites; viz., the Agape and Kiss of Charity, through men's obstinate abuse of them.—Page 5.

Peter Schaff.—In the Apostolic Period, the Eucharist was celebrated in connection with a sim-

ple meal of brotherly love, in which the Christians in common with their common Redeemer, forgot all distinction of rank, wealth and culture, and felt themselves to be members of one family of God.—History of the Christian Church, vol. 1, page 126.

Whitby & Lowman.—These Agape, or feasts of Charity, being mentioned by Jude, Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Apostolic Constitutions, Julian the Apostate: it is very unreasonable to call this custom into question.—Commentary, note on 1 Cor. 11.

So here the rulers of the Jews would not go into the judgment Hall, that they might not be defiled, but be fit to eat the Passover, that is those Paschal offerings of the herd, which were holy things, of which none might eat in their defilement.—Commentary, John 18:28.

It is evident the Apostle reprehends them not for the supper itself, that is the eating and drinking, but because they did take their meat and drink before others, not staying till they came. Hence for a remedy for this disorder, he sayeth not abstain from these suppers, but only tarry one for another.—As above, on 1 Cor. 11:20, 21.

Personalities in Argument.

Our contributors are drifting into an argument upon several subjects of doctrine. There can be no objection to the discussion of Biblical subjects in a proper way. Those who are not willing to have their views tried and twisted should not enter this arena, for when a writer takes up this line he must expect that others hold their opinions as sacred as he does his, and will try to controvert his, as he does his opponent's.

When a man holds views on questions of religious doctrine and church practices, he should hold them as subject to criticism, for they are, and open to be weighed in the balance of knowledge; and if they are found wanting, he should not be offended, no matter what his self-estimation is and his standing before men.

But, in general argumentation it is unnecessary, uncourteous and unprofessional and sometimes unchristian, to use personalities, except in certain ways and places.

Therefore, those who may write upon any subject in this way may expect that the editor will cut out any such matter, and the way to avoid having your manuscript subjected to this process is to use no personalities.

Any writer can write fully as well and as effectively without using any name. The purpose in argumentation should be to advance truth; to present new thought upon the subject discussed, or produce history or the opinions of other men to support a certain view or doctrine.

Another feature of our common style of writing we all want to study to avoid, and that is, the habit of supposing that our assertions are arguments. Simply saying a thing is no reason why any other person should believe that that is law and Gospel. This has always been the trouble with too many men; and they thought that their belief, deductions and views should be respected as God expects us to respect his holy

laws. And above all, let every act and every word written bear the imprint of charity. There is nothing so grand as charity.

Why only "Almost" Persuaded?

The answer is simple. The sinner will not submit to God. Some claim to need more light. There are those with whom this is a genuine difficulty. It is never a sufficient excuse, however genuine. But if it were, it is not the hinderance of the almost persuaded. All the great gospel truths they know. Under conviction they clearly see them. These truths have wrought the persuasion under which they are so deeply moved. With them the Holy Spirit urges the convicted soul. He will not yield; therefore the man is not converted.

Others profess to need leisure to think of religion. Of many, it is true. The want of a little leisure imperils multitudes of souls. It needs, in this our fevered and heedless day, a warning voice, as of some new Baptist, to cry: "Take time to think of your sins and your Savior, to repent and be saved." The pressing need of thousands of men and women is time—a little time from business, a little time from housework, a little from play, a little from sleep,—if they would escape perdition. Men drift into hell. But this is not the want of the almost persuaded. They have passed the need of leisure. They need think no more. They have an immediate duty. It requires not time, but decision. They will not act upon convictions which are already fixed.

Again, there are some who profess to need more stirring appeals. The truth should be more vividly presented; the story of Christ more movingly told. If such a preacher were at hand—if a noted revivalist were to come to the town, to him the heart would yield. Sometimes, it may be, a particular person, a powerful preacher, a revivalist, is needed, through whom the blessings denied to other laborers may be obtained. But not by the almost persuaded. For, otherwise, how could Agrippa have spoken as he did? Confessing so much, what excuse had he for stopping short of Paul's prompt decision, so plainly announced to him. Hear the conscience-smitten man: "Almost thou persuadest me; me, a Herod, of the bloody and incestuous line, kinsman of him who murdered the innocents at Bethlehem, of him who beheaded the Baptist at Machabrus; me, sitting here, with Bernice my paramour and sister, my conscience accusing me of all my crimes, tearing me with fear and remorse,—almost thou persuadest me to repent. This story of thy vision and thy conversion, and they missionary labors; this doctrine of Christ crucified and risen to be my Savior,—take great hold of me. I can scarcely resist them. A little more, and I a prince of Rome and a Jewish king, could be prevailed upon to join the fishermen, and physicians, and tax-gatherers and slaves, and become a Christian."

How could he say so much as this, and say no more, if it was preaching which was to overcome that last reserve of difficulty, when he was addressing Paul of Tarsus, greatest of human preachers! When the tears and the agony of Christ were brought

so before him; when the crucifixion scene was so re-enacted in that judgment hall, that he saw them especially when, at the last, as a final appeal, the prisoner lifted high his manacled hands, and cried, "I would to God that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." If it were powerful preaching that would overcome the last little of the opposition of the soul, make the almost an altogether. Paul would have succeeded that day, Noah would have led a fleet of arks to Ararat, Lot would have drawn hundreds to the hills, and Christ would never have wept over Jerusalem.

MASON.

The Sisters' Benevolent Society.

The Homerville Church, which is located fifteen or twenty miles from Ashland, and presided over by Bro. Jacobs, has a Sisters' Benevolent Society, which is a good institution.

We published the By-laws last week, and forgot to make any comments about them as we intended to do.

The Society moves around from house to house. One time it is entertained by one member, and at another time by another member. The brethren also often attend them, and make it a sort of social holiday. The band of sisters sew for any person who will furnish them with work, the whole company working for one dollar. If no work is furnished, then they make new work which they dispose of.

All money that is received is put into the society treasury, and it is used for benevolent purposes or on the church, as the society decides. They have supplied the Homerville church house with a number of necessary articles since the association has been formed.

We commend the society because it aids in developing the social qualities of the human nature, because money is honestly and worthily made for church and benevolent purposes, because its by-laws provide for a Christian, plain meal, and because it encourages and nourishes love for one another, which is the fulfilling of the law.

Report of Isolated Members.

We purpose to make the coming Annual purely a church document, and we again urge upon isolated members to send in a report of themselves. These will be valuable in various ways. Ministers, in traveling, can often conveniently stop and visit such members if they know where they are. Other ministers are seeking homes, and it may be to their advantage to locate where there is a Brethren family. Here is a report that has already been sent in, and it is a model one, and we recommend it as a form for others:

DEAR BRETHREN.—Noticing your request in the EVANGELIST for isolated members to send in a report of themselves, we will do so. J. L. Hamilton and Sarah A. Hamilton, members of the Brethren Church, are located in the south eastern corner of Ford Co., Kansas. Came here from Bro. A. J. Hixson's charge near Galesburg, Kans., in March, 1886. We are over a hundred miles from any organized Brethren Church. We intend to make this our future home. Want preaching and with the help of God, expect soon to have it.

J. L. HAMILTON.

SARAH A. HAMILTON.

Corbitt, Ford Co., Kansas.

We want to introduce the EVANGELIST into many new homes and we offer it to the end of the year for 25 cents.